THE FLASH

5

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ONE DUMB MISTAKE. IT HAPPENS EVERY DAY.

CLUMSINESS, MOSTLY. OR MAYBE I'M **RILED.** Or sad.

SOMETHING HAPPENS-- I CAN'T **THINK**--

--AND--

--BOOM.

THEY'RE LUCKY IT'S JUST **DESKS** AND **WINDOWS**...

MAYBE IT'S--ohh-- SOME KID CALLS ME A **PSYCHO.** OR EVERYONE LAUGHS WHEN I CAN'T **SOLVE FOR** *x* AT THE BOARD.

(Or Irey whispers to Maxine then **looks** at me...)

THEY'D ALL BE **KINDER** IF THEY KNEW.

PRINCIPAL CRONIN

I-IF THEY KNEW I COULD **SMASH** THIS SCHOOL LIKE GLASS. I COULD TEAR DOWN THIS WHOLE **CITY**--

--RIGHT DOWN ON MY OWN STUPID **DISAPPOINTING HEAD,** AND-- AND **THEN** THEY'D **KNOW**--

--dad would know--

--AND--

--AND--

Stop

STOP.

CALM.

Calm.

BREATHE.

Get... the anger...

...out.

MY NAME'S JAI WEST. **SUPER-POWERS** RUN IN MY FAMILY.

SPEED, MOSTLY. BUT NOT **ME**.

I GOT THE **WEIRD** CRAP.

Like...INSANE **STRENGTH** I CAN'T CONTROL. ABILITY TO GET **CARRIED ALONG** IN OTHER SPEEDSTERS' **SLIPSTREAMS**. AND--

--SINCE A COUPLE WEEKS AGO--

Wh-where did...

--WHATEVER THE HELL **THIS** IS.

JAI? JAI **WEST**?

WAAH!

Oh--AND LET'S NOT FORGET THE VERY **BEST** SUPERPOWER OF ALL.

THE ONE WHERE I **TELEPORT TO MY DAD** WHENEVER I'M STARTLED.

Real confidence booster, that.

YOU EVER FEEL LIKE THE UNIVERSE IS TRYING TO TELL YOU SOMETHING?

FOR ME IT'S: "YOU SUCK! STAY CLOSE TO A RESPONSIBLE ADULT!"

Well.

THERE HE IS. **THE FLASH.** WEARING HIS **REGULAR-PERSON** MASK.

HE SAYS HE'S PROUD OF ME--

--AND IT'S A **TERRIBLE THING** TO SUSPECT YOUR DAD'S A **LIAR.**

STILL **AT** IT, *huh?* DON'T YOU GENIUSES EVER GO BACK TO YOUR HOMES?

IT'S A BIG DAY. WE'RE GOING TO **RESOLVE THIS PHENOMENON.**

THESE **QUARTER-WITS** WILL FINALLY HAVE TO ADMIT **THEIR** THEORIES ARE WRONG. And it's "home", not "homes."

YOU...LIVE **TOGETHER?** *Wow.* BET THERE WAS A HELLUVA FIGHT OVER THE **BEST ROOM.**

WHY ON EARTH WOULD WE NEED MORE THAN **ONE** BEDROOM?

Wh--

WALLY? PREP THE INSTRUMENTS, PLEASE.

SURE THING, MICHAEL.

Uh, **LISTEN--** YOU DO **KNOW** I DON'T UNDERSTAND **HALF** THIS STUFF, RIGHT?

Mmhm. LUCKILY **OBSERVATION** COUNTS HIGHER THAN **COMPREHENSION,** AT THIS LEVEL.

WHATEVER IT IS, WE THINK THIS THING IS **SQUEEZING REALITIES TOGETHER.**

AND I **DON'T** MEAN **MULTIVERSAL ALTERNATES--** THAT STUFF'S **BANAL** THESE DAYS. WE'RE TALKING **COSMOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS.**

OVERLAPPING FREQUENCIES, EACH WITH ITS OWN **LAWS OF PHYSICS.**

THE EXPERTS DISAGREE ON THE **SPECIFICS,** BUT... IN PRINCIPLE? SUBJECT IT TO **MEASUREMENT,** THE ENTANGLEMENT **COLLAPSES.** CRISIS AVERTED.

SO-- IT **IS** DANGEROUS, THEN? *Like--* **TOP PRIORITY?**

CATASTROPHICALLY SO. UNIQUE REALITIES DON'T **MIX.**

ARE YOU **CERTAIN** GRODD CAN'T HELP? WE'D HOPED HIS **ASSET** WOULD SHED SOME LIGHT, BUT-- IT REALLY **IS** JUST A GLORIFIED CALCULATOR.

Asset...?

WHAT **YOU** LOOKIN' AT, DUMMY?

AAA--!

TZZZK

PRINCIPAL CRONIN

ZZZK

I... I jumped *back.*

I JUMPED BACK ALL ON MY *OWN!* THAT'S-- NEVER HAPPENED!

IT'S BECAUSE OF *THIS.*

SEE, KID, WHAT YOU DO-- IT'S NOT *TELEPORTING.* YOU'RE *ENTANGLING* WITH OTHER *CONDUITS* THEN COLLAPSING THE QUANTUM WAVEFORM. IT'S *CLEVER.*

Whuh-- Whuh--

H-how do you know who I am? *LEAVE ME ALONE!*

CHILL, KID.

ZZZK

SUPER-VILLAIN ALERT! SUPERVILLAIN AL--

NOT ***EVERYTHING*** HAS TO FIT INTO THAT WHOLE, *echh--*

--HERO-VS-VILLAIN ***BINARY*** THING.

FACT IS, I HAPPEN TO KNOW YOU'RE KINDA... ***DOWN-IN-THE-DUMPS*** THIS WEEK.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, YOUR ***MENTAL HEALTH'S*** A MATTER OF ***PROFESSIONAL IMPORTANCE*** TO ME.

G-get back in, get back in--

YEAH, SEE? THE ***ATOMIC SPIN'S*** IN ***SUPER-POSITION*** WITH THE REST OF YOU.

SNK

SNK

oh god oh

god oh god

oh god oh

ALL RIGHT.

LET'S TRY THIS ONE LAST TIME.

DAD AGAIN. WEARING HIS **REAL** FACE, NOW. ON THE JOB.

GRODD, WE'VE BEEN TOLD THERE WAS A **COUP** IN GORILLA CITY. WE KNOW THEY EXILED YOU AND A COUPLE HUNDRED **FANATICS.**

"WORSHIPPERS OF THE **MIUNGU,**" THEY SAID. "RESTLESS GODS."

WE KNOW YOU USED ***THIS***-- A CLONED ***ULTRA-HUMANITE BRAIN***-- TO PERFORM ***CALCULATIONS*** WHICH...

...***CHANGED REALITY.***

CREATED A ***STRANGE ATTRACTOR.*** WORE DOWN THE ***BOUNDARIES*** BETWEEN REALMS.

WHAT WE DON'T KNOW IS ***WHY.***

THE EGGHEADS THINK IT'S GONNA DESTABILIZE. ***PLEASE,*** GRODD-- DESTROYING THE UNIVERSE ISN'T YOUR STYLE. THIS IS ***TOP PRIORITY.***

WHAT WAS YOUR PLA--

A ***SCENT.***

:Snff snff:

A CHILD. A SPAWN OF THE FLASH... CLOSE AT HAND...

Uh oh.

HE-HEY-- HIS--HIS RESTRAINTS! HE'S-- HE'S-

DAD!

THE *MIUNGU* PROPHESIED I WOULD BREAK MY ENEMY'S HEART BEFORE *DEVOURING* IT!

KRRAHAKK

THE SLAUGHTER OF HIS SON WOULD BE *APT*, NO?

I COULD HIT HIM SO HIS FANGS BITE THROUGH HIS BRAIN. I COULD SLAP THE AIR SO THE **PRESSURE-CHANGE** SNAPS HIS SPINE.

I COULD **CHANNEL** EVERY BLACK DOG DAY... EVERY **CERTAINTY** THAT I'M A STAIN ON DAD'S **LEGACY.**

I COULD DO WHAT SUPERHEROES DO. I COULD **PUNCH** THE **BAD GUY.**

S-STOP HIM! *Fuh--*>*Wheee*< FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, *SuhsuhSOMEONE* **STOP** HIM!

I COULD.

Or.

Uh. **HI.** I'VE-- *uh.* I'VE ALWAYS WONDERED.

KLK

WHY DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO?

Hm.

ALL THE **COSTUMED IDEOLOGUES...** ALL THE BLOODSHED... Nobody's ever **asked.**

I AM **MWENYE.** I AM THE **FATHER-POSSESSOR.** I AM **SILVER-BACK!**

DIFFICULT FOR YOU **SAPIENS** TO FATHOM WHAT THAT MEANS.

MY TROOP. my family. THEY ARE MY **BREATH--** BUT I AM **NOT** THEIR LORD...

I AM THEIR **SLAVE.** SOMETIMES I CANNOT **BEAR** THE BURDEN OF THEIR HOPES FOR **PROSPERITY.**

BUT I **MUST.**

BECAUSE **NOTHING** I DO... NOT THE WOUNDS I SUFFER NOR THE **BARGAINS** I STRIKE...

...NONE OF IT IS TOO GREAT A PRICE--

--TO BUILD A WORLD OF **CHOICES** FOR MY CHILDREN.

SUCH SHOULD BE THE PRIORITY OF **ANY** RESPONSIBLE FATHER.

THE FLASH

ISSUE FIVE

"TOP PRIORITY"

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...

...START AGAIN?

S-START AGAIN.

INSPECTOR PILGRIM. SCIENCE DETECTIVE.

JAI WEST. WORST SPEEDSTER EVER.

WE...WE SHOULDN'T **BE** H--

RELAX. NOBODY WALKS THROUGH HERE FOR EIGHT MINUTES. Don't ask how I know.

H-HOW DO YOU KN--

YOU ARE ***UNIQUE,*** JAI WEST.

THE ***OTHERS?*** THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE SPEED FORCE IS... ***LINEAR.*** THEY TAP IN-- THEY ***USE*** IT. BUT ***YOU?***

YOU ***RESHAPE*** IT. YOU ***REPURPOSE*** IT. ALL ON ***INSTINCT.***

KINETIC ***HYPER-STIMULATION*** OF ORGANIC MOLECULES... ANIMATED HOMONCULI... QUANTUM ***WORM-HOLES*** TO OTHER SPEEDSTERS...

IT'S ***INCREDIBLE.*** AND WHO KNOWS ***WHAT ELSE*** YOU HAVEN'T EVEN ***TRIED*** YET?

(Actually, I do. But I'm not allowed to tell. ***Rules.***)

THIS THING WITH JUMPING TO YOUR ***DAD--*** IT'S JUST 'CAUSE ***HE'S*** THE CLEAREST CONDUIT.

THESE THINGS? THEY'RE ***ENTANGLEMENT POINTS.*** *Like...* ***FAST TRAVEL*** SPOTS IN A VIDEO GAME. LEAVE 'EM BEHIND, YOU CAN HOP RIGHT BACK.

BUT, KID-- YOU COULD JUMP TO ***ANY*** SPEED FORCE USER, IF YOU WANTED. ANYWHERE, MAYBE EVEN ANY***WHEN.***

GIVE IT A GO.

I...

...I--

DON'T THINK. ***INSTINCT,*** REMEMBER? JUST ***DO IT.***

IT'S NOT THAT EAS--

WHOP

BUT IT IS. PINBALLING BETWEEN CONDUITS LIKE A MOTH WITH A DOZEN MOONS...

...IREY. DOSING ON BANNED BOOKS IN THE SCHOOL LIBRARY DURING A BATHROOM BREAK.

SMARTER THAN ME. QUICKER. BOLDER.

BETTER.

Huh?

UNCLE BARRY-- ENERGY FLICKERING LIKE A BROKEN TORCH--

ARE YOU NUTS? WALLY WORSHIPS YOU! YOU'RE HIS TOP PRIORITY! STOP BEING PROUD AND CALL HIM!

IT'S JUST HEADACHES, IRIS. IT'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

WADE.

I DON'T BEGRUDGE HIM NEEDING MOM'S ATTENTION. I JUST...

...WONDER.

How can there possibly be enough love to go around?

THERE ARE DOZENS. SO MANY MORE LIGHTS THAN I EVER KNEW. EACH A LINK. A GRAPPLE POINT I'VE ONLY GOT TO REACH FOR...

...AND ALL OF THEM FOCUSED... INTENSIFIED... TANGLED--

--THROUGH HIM.

All right. LET'S JUST... CALM DOWN-- okay?

PERFECT GUY.

PERFECT HERO.

PERFECT DAD.

DON'T YOU TELL ME TO CALM DOWN, FLASH! MAX IS STILL OUT THERE! HE'S LOST BECAUSE YOU LEFT HIM BEHIND--

--That's not fair, Impulse--

--BUT INSTEAD OF SEARCHING YOU'RE PLAYING SCIENTIST WITH A FREAKIN' LIGHT-SHOW!

I'VE TRIED TO GET BACK TO THAT DEAD WORLD A DOZEN TIMES. SOMETHING'S CHANGED. I JUST-- I CAN'T FIND IT.

BUT... GRODD, MIRROR MASTER, THAT THING. IT'S ALL CONNECTED. IF I CAN JUST--

I'M GOING TO TIME-POINT.

...What?

SPEEDSTER'S SANCTUARY, RIGHT? YOU SAID THE GIRL WHO RUNS IT-- GOLD BEETLE?-- SHE KNOWS ME FROM THE FUTURE?

IF YOU CAN'T DO RIGHT BY YOUR COMRADES, MAYBE SHE CAN.

BART, MAX IS MY TOP PRIORITY.

YOU CAN ONLY GET TO TIMEPOINT BY DISSOLVING IN THE SPEED FORCE. I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF IT'S STILL THERE! PLEASE, DON'T DO ANYTHING R--

--rash.

Hhhh. I KNOW YOU'RE **THERE,** JAI. YOU'VE BEEN SNEAKING AROUND **ALL MORNING.**

YOU-- think I'm a *sneak?*

What? NO-- **NO,** sorry-- I'M JUST-- A LITTLE...

LOOK, I **LOVE** IT WHEN YOU GET INVOLVED. IT'S THE FAMILY BUSINESS! WE CAN DO THIS STUFF **TOGETHER.**

C'mon-- LET'S GET OUTTA THE RAIN.

ACTUALLY... THERE **WAS** SOMETHING I'VE BEEN WANTING TO TALK ABOUT...

Sounds ominous...

I-it's just... I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN **STRESSED.** Work, family, saving the world... Y-YOU TRY NOT TO LET IT **SHOW,** BUT...

...I **FEEL** IT, DAD. **LITERALLY.** I GET THIS KINDA-- **CRACKLE** IN MY HEAD-- WHENEVER YOU'RE IN TROUBLE. AND **LATELY?**

Th-that's...

IT'S ***ALL THE TIME.***

Naaaah! C'mon. NOTHING THE ***FASTEST MAN ALIVE*** CAN'T HA--

AND I KNOW I'M KINDA A ***DISTRACTION,*** WITH EVERYTHING ELSE GOING ON.

What?

I GET ***SAD*** AND... I'M KINDA ***AWKWARD*** IN MY OWN SKIN. I HAVE ALL THESE, *I dunno,* ***BIG FEELINGS.*** A-AND I KNOW I SCREW UP A ***TON--***

JAI.

--AND I KEEP GETTING SENT TO THE PRINCIPAL, AND-- *I mean,* I CAN'T EVEN RUN FAST, SO--

JAI-- ***STOP.***

YOU'RE MY ***SON.*** I WILL ***NEVER*** NOT BE PROUD OF YOU.

YOU'RE MY ***TOP PRIORITY.***

Yeah.

ME AND EVERYONE ELSE.

DAD. I'VE DECIDED THAT I D--

ALL RIGHT-- WE'RE UP AND RUNNING.

STAND BY FOR TELEMETRY. WAVEFORM SEEMS TO BE ***STA--***

NO.

Th-the Stillness.

WH-WHY DID YOU **STOP** US? THAT PHENOMENON COULD **DESTROY EVERYTHING!**

THE BEACON HAS BEEN SET. WE MUST SEE WHAT IT LURES.

I CAN'T ALLOW YOU T--

FOOL. WE ARE MONITORS OF THE [DEEPCHANGE]. THERE IS NO "ALLOW".

AAAHH!

DAD!

Hm. THE CHILD IS A SHAPER. HOW UNEXPECTED.

HOW DISGUSTING.

POP POP

J--

Jai...

I FEEL IT.

EVEN BROKEN INTO--
what was it?--
ANIMATED HOMUNCULI...
I FEEL IT.

A STORM, RISING FROM THE SILENCE OF FOREVER.

DAD'S NEVER LOST HIS **TEMPER** AT HOME. HE'S TOO PERFECT TO TICK OFF.

But...SOMETIMES **AUNT IRIS** JOKES ABOUT THE HOTHEADED **SIDEKICK**. SOMETIMES, IF YOU WATCH **REEEEAL** CLOSE, YOU CATCH A GLIMPSE.

TIGHT JAW. COLD SMILE. I GUESS I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN IT'S IN THERE, DEEP DOWN.

BUT NOT LIKE THIS.

AN INFINITE GULF OF **TERRIBLE ENERGY** IS BUILDING, LIKE A **LEVEE** ABOUT TO **BURST**.

OBSERVE... THE ***RAGGED EDGES*** OF THE BRANEWALL! AT LAST!

HE **IS** THE KILLING STROKE! THE END OF MATH! THE ***FIRE*** TO SUMMON AN ARC AN--

YYYYOOOLLL

DIIIE!

DAD?

DAD! STOP IT!

Wh--?

...Jai. Oh god. I THOUGHT I LOST YOU-- I THOUGHT--

I'M OKAY. I **PULLED MYSELF TOGETHER,** SEE?

LOOK. I-IT'S OVER. THE **SWIRLY THING'S** GONE. THOSE **ALIENS,** TOO.

IT'S ALL OVER.

"WELL. HE BLINKED. ASKED ME WHAT IT WAS I WANTED TO **TELL** HIM.

"SO... I **DID.**

HE WAS QUIET, AWHILE. Afterward. THEN HE MADE OUT LIKE IT WAS **NO BIG DEAL.** SMILE...HUG... **"WHATEVER MAKES YOU HAPPY, SON."**

THEN HE WAS GONE.

"I **TRIED** TO FOLLOW. GOT A **GLIMPSE.** *Weird* place, statues everywhere. BUT I LOST HIM.

"LIKE HE JUST... DROPPED OFF THE WORLD."

WHAT DID YOU **TELL** HIM? WHAT WAS SO **IMPORTANT?**

I'VE DECIDED I DON'T WANT TO BE A SUPERHERO, DAD.

OKAY, LISTEN. I EXPECT YOU THINK HE WAS... ***DISAPPOINTED?*** BUT I ***KNOW***-- I can't tell you ***how*** I know, but I know--

--HE COULDN'T LOVE YOU MORE IF HE TRIED.

Hah. ***THANKS,*** BUT-- IT'S OKAY. I'M NOT ***LIKE*** HIM. I DON'T ***NEED*** TO BE.

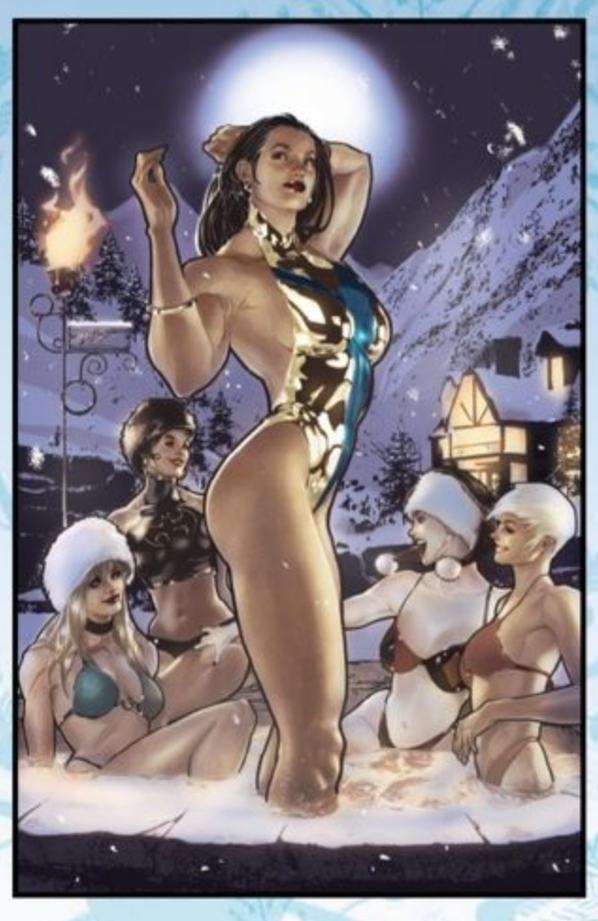
FACT IS-- HE'S ***NOT*** PERFECT. I KNOW THAT NOW. AND I GUESS I ***BELIEVE*** IT NOW TOO, WHEN HE SAYS HE'S PROUD OF ME.

KNOW WHY?

"BECAUSE FOR ***ME*** HE WOULD'VE ***SHATTERED THE WORLD.***"

TO BE CONTINUED...

HEAT THINGS UP THIS WINTER WITH DC'S SWEATER WEATHER VARIANT COVERS!



BIRDS OF PREY #6

Sweater Weather variant cover by
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FIRE & ICE: WELCOME TO SMALLVILLE #6

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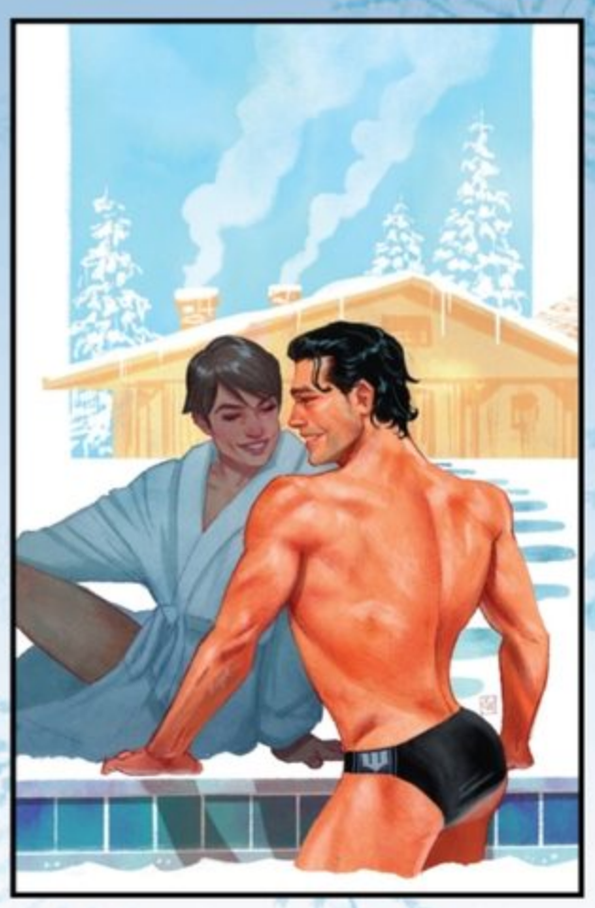

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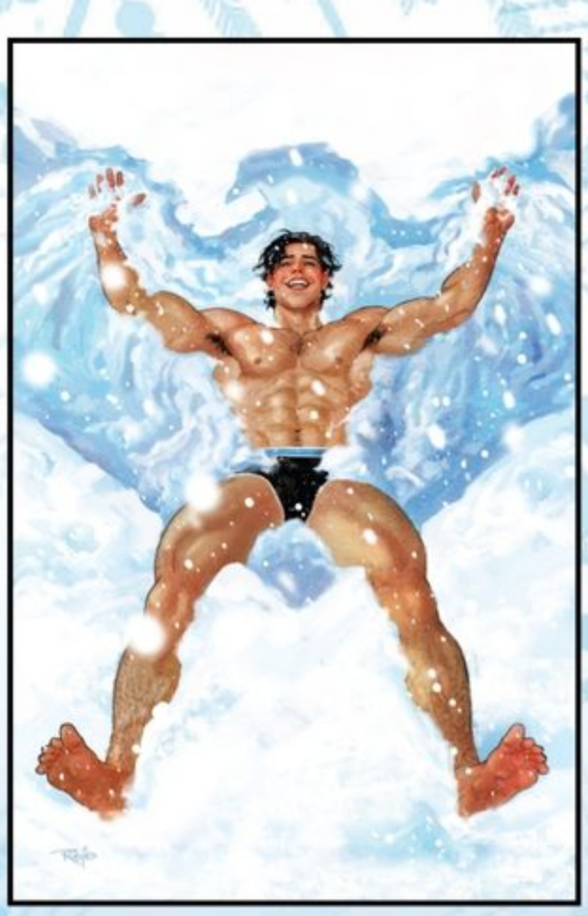

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COLLECT THEM ALL!

ON SALE IN
FEBRUARY

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DC NATION SPOTLIGHT ON

TRINITY

DC's biggest breakout character of 2023 gets her own 48-page one-shot special in the first month of 2024 with *Trinity Special*, a collection of the first appearances of Wonder Woman's daughter—plus an all-new story from the *Wonder Woman* team of writer Tom King and artist Daniel Sampere.

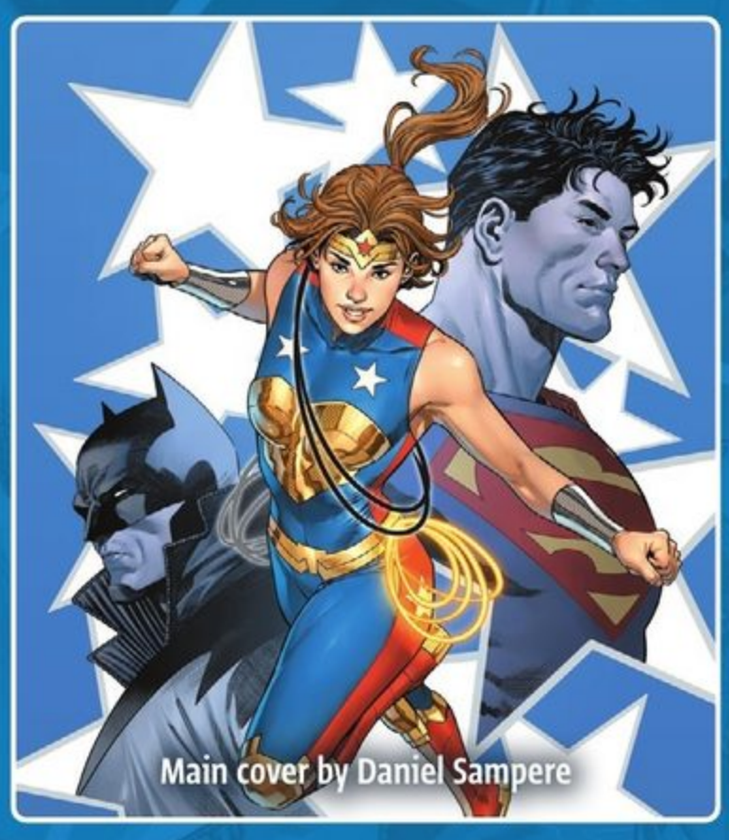
Elizabeth "Lizzie" Marston Prince debuted in a future-set story by King and Sampere from last year's *Wonder Woman* #800, and immediately captured fans' attention and attracted national headlines via her engaging personality, trio of lassos, and friendship with Jonathan Kent and Damian Wayne, now both adults.

"It's been crazy and amazing and overwhelming and so damn cool," King said of the reception of Trinity. "We sold out a huge order on her first appearance."

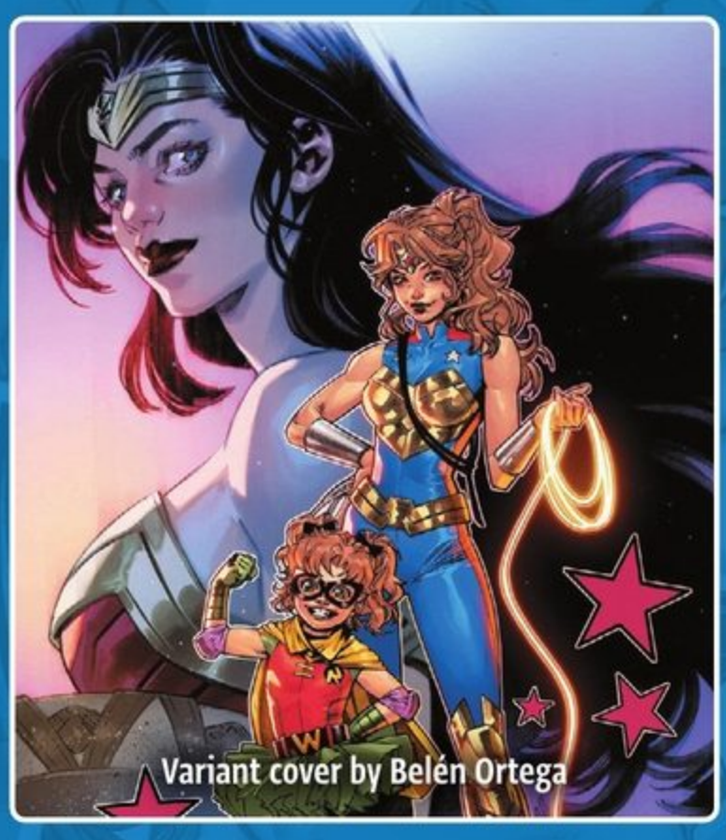
The ongoing *Wonder Woman* series has started to reveal the circumstances behind Trinity's origin, both in the present day and in backup stories depicting Jonathan and Damian (adorably) babysitting young Lizzie. Of course, there's still much more to learn about this character.

"*Wonder Woman* is her tale, where she comes from, where she's going," King said. "And that's a hell of a myth to put together—the birth of a new Wonder."

Along with the new story, *Trinity Special* includes her debut from *Wonder Woman* #800 and the backup stories from *Wonder Woman* #3-5—and arrives with extraordinary variant covers, seen here.



Main cover by Daniel Sampere



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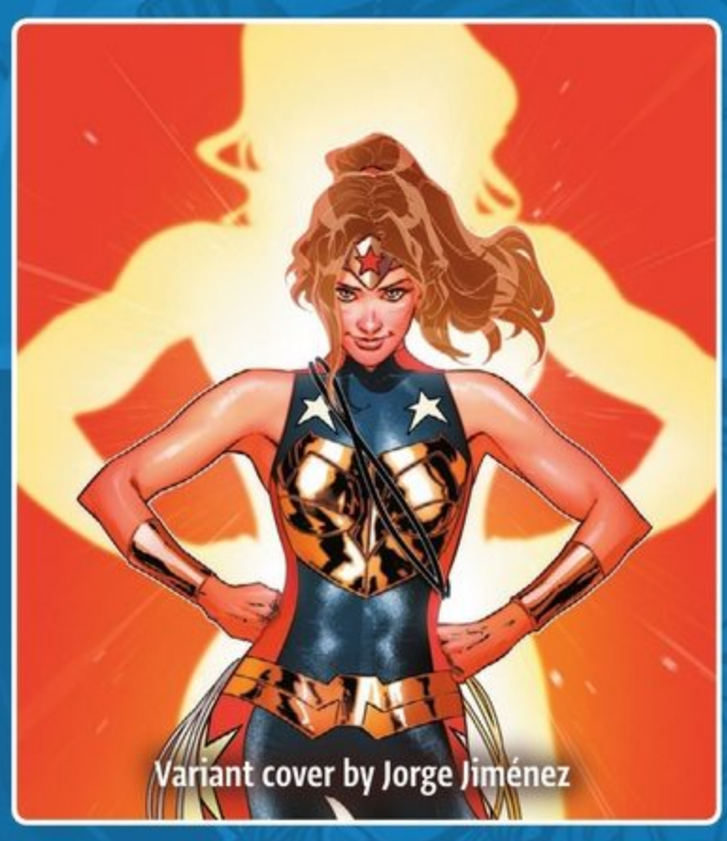

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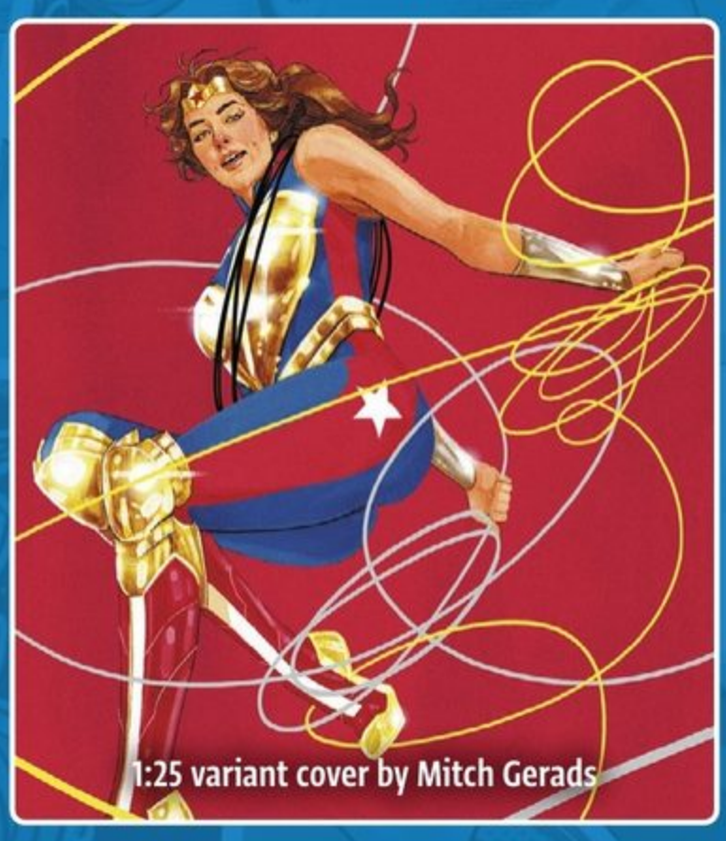
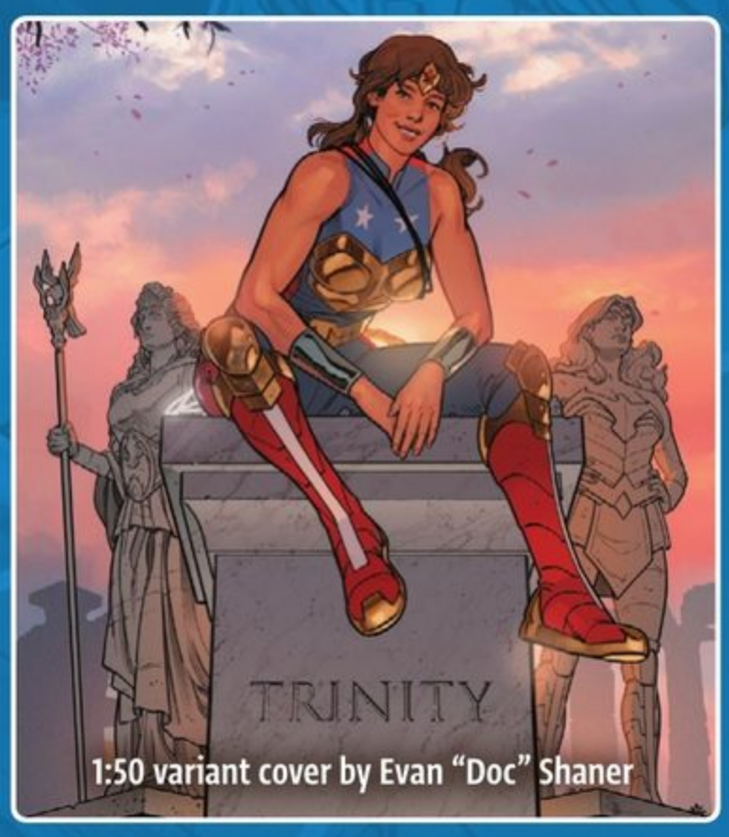


1:25 variant cover by Mitch Gerads



1:50 variant cover by Evan "Doc" Shaner

DON'T MISS *TRINITY SPECIAL*, ON SALE IN JANUARY!

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